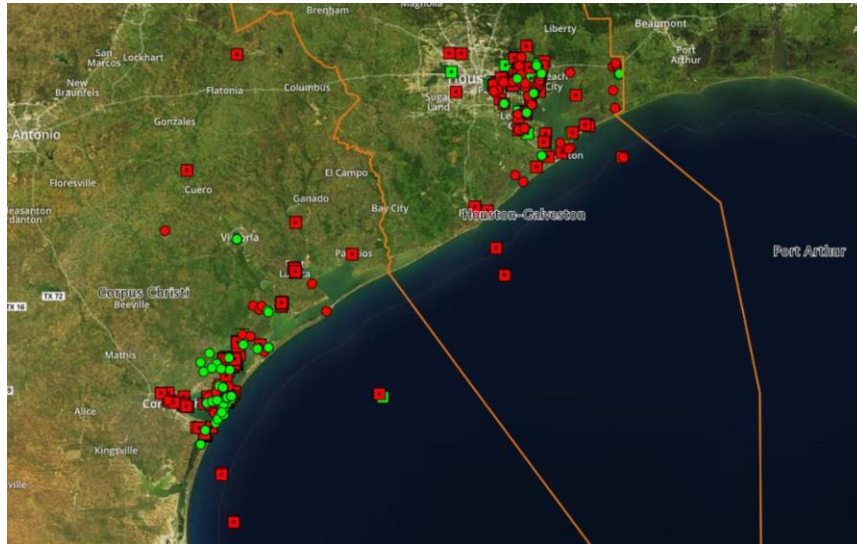


## Initial Public Information Plan: Hurricane Harvey ESF10 – Texas



**APPROVED BY: U.S. Coast Guard**  
**Federal On-scene Coordinator**  
*Signature*

*Date*

**APPROVED BY: Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Federal On-scene Coordinator**  
*Signature*

*Date*

**APPROVED BY: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**  
**Local On-scene Coordinator**  
*Signature*

*Date*

**APPROVED BY: Texas General Land Office**  
**Local On-scene Coordinator**  
*Signature*

*Date*



# Public Information Plan: Hurricane Harvey ESF10 – Texas

## Unified Command:

- U.S. EPA
- U.S. Coast Guard – (National Strike Force / Gulf Strike Team)
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas General Land Office

## Background:

A Unified Command has been established with Federal and State agencies in response to the damage and other impacts of Hurricane Harvey. Under an ESF-10 Mission Assignment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas General Land Office (TGLO) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are working as a Unified Command evaluating, cleaning up and recovering spills, releases and orphan containers in impacted areas of Texas.

Field operations are managed from three Branch locations: Alpha Branch in Corpus Christi, with a Bravo Branch in Houston and a third Charlie Branch in Port Arthur. Joint teams at the three branches are focused on oil and container recovery and assessing discharges of oil.

## Media Interest

Currently, there is high media attention on Superfund sites that were flooded in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. Per agency SOP, EPA continues to respond to those inquiries from local and national news outlets with information on EPA's assessment of 41 Superfund sites and their current status. Those inquiries are being handled or fielded from both their regional and national headquarters in Dallas, Texas, and Washington, D.C., respectfully.

It is likely that media interest will intensify on pollution response as more communities start assessing their overall damage and removal of debris and other wastes gets underway for collection and disposal. Unified Command field response operations will likely be a major focus of the media's coverage.

## Unified Command Communication Objectives:

- Provide safety messages to the public in a timely manner with the broadest dissemination feasible. Ensure citizens are as knowledgeable as possible on staying safe from environmental hazards considering the circumstances they are presented with at the time.
- Provide timely information about response efforts and keep all stakeholders informed of:
  - operational status of drinking water and waste water systems and any precautions to be taken by the public; and
  - containment, collection and mitigation of potential contaminants throughout impacted areas.

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- Provide reports of affected ecosystems and wildlife. Damage to the environment is a specifically sensitive subject and should be addressed with care. All communication with the public about the impact to the environment should be honest, accurate and forthcoming to build trust.

## Communication Methods:

Information will be pushed out to the public through several communication channels including the Hurricane Harvey Response websites at:

- FEMA's <https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-harvey> as the central hub of all information related to the impact of this natural disaster;
- EPA's [https://response.epa.gov/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=12353](https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=12353) for information and updates about EPA's response activities;
- USCG's <https://www.dvidshub.net/> as a public- and media-facing repository for all Hurricane Harvey imagery as submitted by trained DoD/DHS photographers;
- TCEQ's <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/hurricanes> for information and updates about TCEQ's response activities; and
- TGLO's <http://www.glo.texas.gov/index.html> for information and updates about TGLO's response activities.

Additional methods employed include: Unified Command press conferences, press releases, fact sheets, media and public availabilities, and PIO/JIC media and phone interviews as generated, responded to, or reviewed by the EPA PIO and USCG PIO in Corpus Christi. Social media platforms to be used include:

[Www.facebook.com/eparegion6](http://www.facebook.com/eparegion6)

[Www.twitter.com/eparegion6](http://www.twitter.com/eparegion6)

## News Releases

Based on the level of public interest and trust, the Unified Command should keep news releases strictly to operations. News releases should be used to update the news about the situation with legitimate or new information daily or as appropriate. (Continually updating news outlets with little to no news will typically confuse the audience and keep the story from becoming salable. This applies to press conferences as well.)

It is recommended to send a news release with information including involved parties/agencies, timeline info, safety measures, command messages and pertinent statistics. Releases should be no longer than three-quarters of a page.

- Include the makeup of the Unified Command
- **BASIC** information about the incident, as available at time of release

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- Include exclusion and safety zone (if applicable) (who called evacuation?)
- Include evacuations (if applicable)
- Include information about air/water monitoring (if applicable)
- Include information about wildlife impacts (if applicable) (observed, reported, monitoring, and include hotline)
- Include phone number of JIC and operating hours per operational period
- Include links to social media sites and website (if applicable)

## Social Media

*See above for EPA sites*

*Reminder: Due to space limitations save short, concise posts for Twitter. Include URL to release and/or FB page for longer updates. Social Media is used to communicate directly to the community. If you have low community outrage or interest, social media is not the tool to use. Best practice: use an existing social media platform with an already established audience to reach the target community as quickly as possible. Examples include: local EPA page, local emergency management, fire department, etc.)*

### Twitter

Include UC-approved #hashtag to initiate conversation

- Initial tweet about the incident
- Establishment of UC, link to first release, hashtag
- Continue with basic facts, #hashtag
- Evacuation zone (as applicable)
- Safety/Exclusion zone (as applicable)

### Facebook

- Announce establishment or disbanding of Unified Command and response
- Direct followers to Twitter (if applicable) and Response URL

## Press Conference

Schedule as appropriate to meet UC scheduling needs and media cycle. Press conferences should be used for announcing new or significant changes, as well as a means to provide UC visuals for authority presence in media reporting.

## Recommendations

- Timely imagery, press releases, on camera interviews and news conferences will help keep the public informed and satisfied.
- The media should be invited to view operations from a safe distance if operational assets can be provided (media availabilities per EPA).
- Coordination of all other agencies involved should be represented in the Joint

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Information Center to create specific stakeholder messaging.

- Talking points and command messages for the response should be generated and distributed to spokespersons.
- The Unified Command should be made available for media interviews, putting trusted subject matter experts in key places to handle the basic questions the news may have.

## Analysis

- Analysis of the media and public response to the above tactics is crucial to the success of this information plan or strategy. Television and print pieces, as well as web content to include news sites, blogs and social media traffic should be reviewed for stories regarding the Unified Command and the response.
- Look for rumors, themes and the use of Unified Command messages. Are your messages being used? Are they using the UC as a source? Are they getting the story right? Who is getting the message?
- Only through analyzing the news and social media will the Unified Command be able to fine-tune messages and delivery methods to better address and inform the public. Careful scrutiny should be placed on messaging to ensure that the public is receiving as much information as possible to make informed opinions about the operations performed and decisions made.

## Internal Response

Press releases and pertinent news clips should be provided to SITL or displayed in an appropriate gathering area of the ICP to keep internal responders informed of current news coverage and public perception of the response operations. PIO will provide guidance for public information concerns for responders through the meeting schedule and the 204 as appropriate.

## Imagery release plan

### STEP 1:

Field Specialists/Imagery Gatherers are attached to and deployed with OPS at the 3 branches. (Branch: A- Corpus, B- Houston, C- Port Arthur). The ICP is currently located in Corpus Christi co-located with 'A' where the PIO is an EPA lead. Ms. Terri White is the EPA PIO for the Incident. USCG PIAT PIO is supporting and coordinating with Ms. White and other partner agencies for messaging. The branches will support the UC and carry out operations. *Field Specialists/Imagery Gatherers will follow the direction of the site safety supervisor.*

### STEP 2:

Field Specialists/Imagery Gatherers will receive guidance from the ICP/PIO/JIC about the overall priorities, objectives and direction of the UC. Field Specialists/Imagery Gatherers

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should also talk with their branch director to receive additional information and site-specific objectives to better identify imagery/information opportunities. Photo and video themes will include partnership, cooperation and safety. Video will be ‘B-roll’ in nature with no effects or music and may be slated by the videographer.

## STEP 3:

Field Specialists/Imagery Gatherers will capture photo and video imagery, return to their respective JIC and download product to their laptops, following traditional file naming practices. (Verify organizational details, spelling of names, and mission) Cutlines will reflect Coast Guard supporting the EPA in its mission wherever possible and may be drafted in advance by Field Specialists/Imagery Gatherers to expedite this process, but the EPA PIO must also approve these. The AP Stylebook will be adhered to.

## STEP 4:

EPA PIO will provide supporting messaging for cutline support and will act as the approving authority for all information release, photo, video and cutline.

## STEP 5:

Mission select photos chosen for release will be routed to three places:

□ *HurricaneHarveyESF10@gmail.com* (Password: GoPackers7)

This is a central repository for images allowing SITL/DOCL and the response in general will have access. This is the first and most critical stop.

□ **DVIDS:** After the EPA PIO approves selected imagery or video they can then be uploaded into DVIDS as normal for media and public consumption. *This is carried out by USCG PAs with DVIDS accounts.*

□ **EPA Email: *R6HarveyPIO@EPA.GOV*** Finally, EPA will receive cleared and vetted imagery or video to post as they deem appropriate for official releases. There is no approval necessary at this point.

#